

Carnegie Mellon

Lifeline Your Safety Resource

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National Preparedness Month

Jim Gindlesperger

Were you aware that September was National Preparedness Month? Did you even know there was such a thing? And what does it mean, anyway? Preparedness for what?

National Preparedness Month is a national effort, co-sponsored by the American Red Cross and the Department of Homeland Security, to make people aware of the need for personal preparation for emergencies.

Even though September is behind us, the importance for emergency preparedness remains. Emergencies happen year-round, and the recent hurricane tragedies underscore the need for all of us to prepare for emergencies, both at work and at home. If you haven't done so already, you should take some simple steps to prepare for emergencies including assembling an emergency supply kit, making a family emergency plan, and staying informed about the threats to our security, both natural and man-made.

For some guidance on what to do in an emergency, or to learn what you should include in your emergency supply kit, the EH&S web site provides some helpful tips:

http://www.cmu.edu/ehs/Occupational_Safety/emergencysafetytips.htm

Additional information on National Preparedness Month can be found at two Department of Homeland Security sites: <http://www.ready.gov/npm/index.htm> and <http://www.ready.gov/index.html>, or at the American Red Cross web site: http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_239_,00.html

Environmental Audit Results

Mark Banister

On August 1st through the 3rd, an outside consultant performed an environmental audit of Carnegie Mellon. The university contracted with the auditors to evaluate the university as if they were the Environmental Protection Agency performing an inspection. Some of you may remember that a similar audit was performed in the fall of 2001. A wide variety of subject areas were evaluated including hazardous waste generation, asbestos and lead management, emergency planning, oil management activities, and hazardous material storage and handling activity.

For the most part, the audit went very well. Of the labs and other hazardous materials areas visited, 94% of them had either no issues of concern or very minor (and easily fixed) ones. The problems found in the remaining areas have either already been corrected or are in the process of completion.

We have demonstrated significant improvement with this past audit—the work all of us are doing in incorporating good environmental and safety practices in our daily work routine is paying off. We need to continue to not only keep this up but strive for 100% compliance for Carnegie Mellon.

The Tipping Point

Madelyn Miller

This international best seller, *The Tipping Point*, has lessons for us all and Malcolm Gladwell's theories relate to the university's goal toward a safe environment. How? If you have a lab space where chemicals are spilled on the bench tops, samples and glassware are everywhere, it shows that no one cares about their working place anymore. The lab simply becomes worse and worse, accidents or releases are more likely to happen. If that lab had a compliance audit by The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) they might take a "fine-tooth comb" approach. They would get the impression that chemicals were not well managed. Gladwell uses the following example: The broken window syndrome - When you see a vacant building with a broken window, trash strewn here and there, graffiti on the walls, there is tendency is to put more graffiti on the walls, break more windows, and dump more trash. The area becomes worse and worse because no one cares.

Everyone hopes someone else will fix the problem, no one usually does.

So, one of the *Tipping Point's* solution is do something small that will make a difference. Pick up some trash you see on campus, wipe off a bench top, throw away (properly) samples and glassware that aren't used or needed any more. Sometimes something small, done by many people will make a big difference, the tipping point.

Flu Season

Andrew Lawson

As summer comes to a close and autumn approaches, flu season will be soon upon us. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), flu season in the United States usually ranges from November through March, and sometimes into early spring. Every year in the United States, on average:

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- 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu;
- more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications, and;
- about 36,000 people die from flu.

To avoid getting the flu the CDC recommends the following preventative measures:

- Get the flu vaccine in the fall
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Wash your hands often
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Consult your physician about receiving antiviral drugs

Following these simple measures can go a long way in preventing you from getting the flu. For more information on the flu, go to www.cdc.gov/flu/.

Radiation Safety Training for New X-ray Users Now Online!

John Zoll

Students and researchers who use analytical x-ray machines are required by the State of Pennsylvania to receive radiation safety training. The initial training can now be taken online at the Environmental Health and Safety website: www.cmu.edu/ehs.

Follow the link to radiation safety, and then another to x-ray safety training. You will view a slideshow and then be required to take a short quiz.

A second, "hands on" training session will be scheduled by your supervisor on the specific machine that you will be using. Contact John Zoll at 268-7502 with any questions or concerns.

Congratulations!

Jim Gindlesperger

Please join us in congratulating our colleague, Bob Anderegg, for his 40 years of service to the university. Bob currently serves as our Fire Safety Specialist and his

service was recognized at the recent Andy Awards. Congratulations, Bob!

They Look Nice, Smell Good, Help to Keep the Bugs Away, but....

Bob Anderegg

Candle usage has skyrocketed over the last 20 years, and their manufacture has become a \$2 billion industry, with an estimated 7 out of 10 households using candles. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports, however, that fires caused by the use of candles have also skyrocketed! For example, candles were reported to have caused 18,000 home fires in the United States in 2001, resulting in 190 fatalities, 1350 civilian injuries, and an estimated \$265 million in property loss. About one-half of recent candle-related fire fatalities are under 20 years of age.

Candle fires can spread quickly, and usually occur when they are left unattended and flames come in contact with other combustible material. The greatest percentage of these fires are occurring not in sleeping areas, but in common locations, such as livingrooms, dens, etc. Ironically, the number of home fires has recently been decreasing while candle-related fires have increased. This means that proportionately, home fires caused by candles is on the rise.

A ban on the use of candles in student residences was instituted at Carnegie Mellon many years ago, after they were recognized as a leading cause of dormitory fires. Because of the potential risk to personal safety and loss of property presented by the use of candles, I ask that we all observe this ban not only in student residence buildings, but throughout the University.

Topic of Chemical-resistant Gloves is Heating Up

Jeff Harris

Almost everyone knows the importance of wearing gloves when working with chemicals. Also, take them off when finished to prevent cross contamination. Selecting the appropriate type is just as important as wearing the gloves in the first

place. For help in selecting the proper glove visit www.chemrest.com, or contact EH&S for help. Additionally, you can learn approximately how long the glove can be expected to last before needing to be changed. You may be surprised to know they don't last very long. There are additional limitations, for example: temperature has a significant effect on the chemical-resistant properties of the polymeric materials in gloves. Not just heat from chemical reactions or mantels, even the body heat from your hands can affect the gloves performance. Also know, if 'chemical breakthrough' occurs while you are wearing gloves an even bigger danger may occur. Known as occlusion (sealing off), heated chemicals permeate the glove more rapidly and are absorbed through the skin at an even higher rate.

Occlusion can increase the toxic effects of a chemical by increasing the dose or amount of chemical that is absorbed. This happens because: Hydration of the skin is increased.

- The temperature of the skin is increased.
- The substance remains in contact with the skin for a longer period of time.
- The evaporation of volatile materials is prohibited.

Besides eye protection, gloves are one of the most important pieces of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be worn in a lab. So know your gloves!

October is Fire Safety Month.

Don't forget to change the batteries in your smoke detectors.